

**North Country Community College  
COVID-19 Screening and Testing FAQs  
Fall 2020**

*This document is designed to help keep our campus community apprised of information and details related to COVID-19 screening and testing protocols and requirements. As with all things related to COVID-19, as changes emerge, they will be reflected in the guidance provided here.*

*The majority of North Country Community College operations are occurring remotely. This includes class instruction, academic, career and transfer advisement, student engagement, student recruitment and registration, as well as many administrative supports.*

**On-Campus Presence**

**1. As an employee, am I allowed to work from my office?**

Yes, provided there is a need to do so. Wherever possible, we are asking employees that can, to work from home. The coronavirus remains a threat and infection rates are anticipated to spike as we turn towards winter and are inside more often.

**2. What is considered an “essential” worker and how do I know whether I am one or not?**

While the College is exempt from the essential business reductions which are part of [Executive Order 202.6](#), we are still required to follow provisions under Executive Order 202 which restricts non-essential personnel. A non-essential worker is one who can complete their work remotely; conversely, essential workers must be on-site to do their work.

**3. If I am working on campus, what is required of me?**

All employees are required to be COVID-19 symptom-free, not be under mandatory quarantine or isolation, and to complete the *Daily COVID Screening tool* prior to or upon arrival to campus. The tool can be accessed at [https://www.nccc.edu/human\\_resources/index.html](https://www.nccc.edu/human_resources/index.html).

All employees are required to wear masks when indoors except when in one’s personal office. Masks are also required to be worn outdoors on College property or when on business for the College when social distancing cannot be maintained.

The expectation is that all workspaces have reduced density, appropriate spacing and protective barriers (where necessary), and that all safety precautions, including social distancing and regular handwashing or use of hand sanitizer are being followed. If any of these conditions are not being met, the employee is encouraged to alert their supervisor and our Campus Safety Monitor, Tara Smith.

**4. Do I need to complete the Daily COVID Screening tool if I pop-in to campus at random times and days?**

Yes, each time an employee is on-campus, regardless of the frequency or time of day, they are required to complete the screening. The tool can be accessed at [https://www.nccc.edu/human\\_resources/index.html](https://www.nccc.edu/human_resources/index.html).

**5. How often do I need to work from the office to be considered as having a “regular” presence on campus?**

The College is defining regular as an average of one (1) day per week. In this case as in all others, we encourage our community to err on the side of caution, so if your time is close to that average, consider yourself as having a regular presence on campus.

**6. Does the administration keep a list of those who are on-campus?**

No. We trust our employees to follow the requirements that we, as a College, must follow. In many cases, these are SUNY, county and state-level mandates. We know those whose work requires them to be on-campus. For those who drop-in or work less frequently, the visit is recorded and communicated to our Campus Safety Officer through the screening tool.

**Employee Screening**

**1. How often do I need to complete the North Country Community College Daily COVID Screening tool?**

Screening for COVID-19 using the *Daily COVID Screening tool* is required each time an employee is on-campus, regardless of the frequency or time of day, they are required to complete the screening. The tool can be accessed at [https://www.nccc.edu/human\\_resources/index.html](https://www.nccc.edu/human_resources/index.html).

**2. Where can I locate the College Daily Office COVID Screening tool?**

The tool can be accessed at [https://www.nccc.edu/human\\_resources/index.html](https://www.nccc.edu/human_resources/index.html).

**3. If I am already using a COVID-19 screening tool at home, do I still need to complete the College’s Daily COVID Screening tool?**

Yes. While we applaud the steps you are taking to ensure your safety and health as well as that of our community, employees are required to complete the College’s *Daily COVID Screening tool* each time they are on campus.

**4. If I am working in a fully remote fashion, do I need to complete the College’s Daily COVID Screening tool when working?**

No. The screening tool is only completed by those coming to campus. While it will be helpful to familiarize yourself with the screening questions as one further step to protect yourself and others, we ask that you do not complete it unless you are planning to be on-campus.

**5. Do screening requirements apply to all campuses?**

Yes. Screening is required for employees whenever they will be on campus property. That includes all of our operations in Malone, Saranac Lake, and Ticonderoga.

**Employee Testing**

**1. What are the testing requirements for employees?**

On November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020 the College entered into an agreement with the North Country Community College Association of Professionals (NCCCAP) regarding testing requirements for NCCCAP members who are on-campus conducting “some or all of their work obligation”. That agreement specifies that NCCCAP members who fall under that definition are required to participate in pooled saliva surveillance testing conducted by the College, at no expense to the employee. Testing is to take place at a minimum once every two weeks. That agreement runs through the end of the 2020-2021 academic.

For other employees, including CSEA and Management Confidential (MC), the College does not currently have any testing requirements, though we are exploring requiring ongoing surveillance testing for those MC employees who are working on campus regularly. The College is defining regular as an average of one (1) day per week. At present, all employees are invited and encouraged to participate in pooled saliva surveillance testing at no cost.

**2. If I am regularly on campus each Monday and testing is only available on Tuesdays, am I expected to return for testing?**

Yes, unless another option, such as restructuring your on-campus days to those when testing is taking place on that campus.

**3. What is pooled saliva surveillance testing and how does it work?**

Pooled saliva surveillance testing (PSST) is method to detect the presence of the novel coronavirus through a person’s saliva. Participants provide a saliva sample obtained through swabbing the inside of one’s cheek. Up to twelve (12) samples are pooled together and tested as one unit. The methodology allows for detection of virus in the pooled sample and, if found, to test each individual sample to determine which individual(s) is/are positive.

**4. Where is the pooled saliva surveillance testing occurring?**

We are offering pooled saliva surveillance testing on each of our campuses and employees can participate at any one of them. Dates and times are provided by our Campus Safety Monitor, Tara Smith. The samples themselves are analyzed by SUNY Upstate, where the testing procedure was developed.

**5. What are the costs of participating in pooled saliva surveillance testing?**

There are no costs for the employee. The College pays \$15/sample and an additional \$60/sample if positive tests are identified.

**6. Are there any restrictions that I should know about related to testing?**

Yes. Prior to testing, participants are not to eat or drink anything, including chewing gum, mints, or lozenges, within 30 minutes of reporting, and should not have brushed their teeth or used mouthwash within the past three hours. In addition, those testing must abstain from smoking, vaping, or using smokeless tobacco products for 30 minutes prior to the test.

**7. How is the sample I provide identified as mine?**

Participants need to register with SUNY Upstate at least two days prior to testing at <https://www.suny-covid-test.com/>. In addition to demographic information, the registration requires insurance information in case additional testing of the sample is required (this only occurs if the samples are positive). On the day of testing, each individual is provided with a test kit that comes with a unique number which becomes identified as theirs. Those are double-checked and matched up with the profile you created with SUNY Upstate.

**8. How am I notified of my testing results?**

SUNY Upstate notifies our Campus Safety Monitor, Tara Smith, of the results of each pooled sample. This is done through a secure email. Tara will then distribute that information to each participant.

**9. How soon will I know the results?**

At present, the results are coming back generally 2-3 days after the sample is sent to SUNY Upstate.

**10. What happens if I test positive for COVID-19 through the pooled saliva surveillance test?**

All testing results are communicated to our Campus Safety Monitor, Tara Smith, through secure email. If you test positive, Tara will then reach out to you personally to apprise you of that, contact the county public health office where you live (this is required of us), and work to help you prepare for the required precautionary isolation measures you will need to take. The county public health officials will also conduct contact tracing.

**11. If I test positive for COVID-19, do I need to have another COVID-19 test before I can return to work?**

No. Testing is not required as a condition to return to work. Current guidance is that one must isolate for no less than ten (10) days and have three (3) consecutive fever-free and symptom-free days before returning to work.

**12. Are test results place in one's personnel files?**

No. They are kept separate and are used only to ensure tracking, notification, and safety of the individual and campus community.

**13. *If I test positive for COVID-19, should I participate in the pooled saliva surveillance testing that the College offers?***

No. Current guidance is that if one has tested positive for COVID-19 within the last three months and has recovered, they have the potential to register as positive in the test. Those individuals are encouraged to monitor themselves through symptom scanning.

**14. *If I participate in the pooled saliva surveillance testing, do I need to also participate in the screening tool?***

Yes. Screening is required for employees whenever they will be on campus property. The tool can be accessed at [https://www.nccc.edu/human\\_resources/index.html](https://www.nccc.edu/human_resources/index.html).

**15. *Can I participate in pooled saliva surveillance testing elsewhere?***

We are not aware of anyone else offering pooled saliva surveillance testing in our area. If it is being offered, the College has no prohibition against your participation.

**16. *Can the results from the pooled saliva surveillance testing be used to satisfy the testing requirements of other agencies (e.g. nursing homes)?***

Our understanding is that they are not being accepted by other agencies as proof of COVID-19 negative status.

**17. *If I am traveling out-of-state, do I need to be tested before return to work?***

No. Currently, New York State has added an option to “test out” of the required 14-day quarantine period following travel to a restricted area. If an employee chooses the “test out” option, sharing the results with our Campus Safety Monitor would be appreciated.

All employees are required to follow the New York State guidelines surrounding travel to restricted areas. That information can be found here <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/covid-19-travel-advisory>.

**18. *If there is need to conduct a nasal test on staff, but there are medical reasons for not doing so, i.e. blood thinners and high risk of nose bleeds, how should this be addressed?***

We do not anticipate that we would need to require nasal tests on our staff. Our understanding is that nasal swab or combined nasal/throat swab have been shown to be as or almost as effective as nasopharyngeal swabs. However, as with all health concerns, we advise each person to speak with their provider to plan what is best for them.

**19. Can you summarize the guidance on screening and testing as to the conditions that would require my participation?**

Yes, see the table below.

<b>On-campus Working Status</b>	<b>Screening</b>	<b>Testing</b>
Regular ( $\geq 1$ day per week)	Each day/time before coming to campus	Pooled saliva surveillance testing every two weeks
Non-regular ( $\leq 1$ day per week)	Each day/time before coming to campus	No testing requirement

***Student Screening***

**1. How often do I need to complete the North Country Community College Daily COVID Screening tool?**

Screening for COVID-19 using the *Daily Screening COVID Screening tool* is required each time a student is on-campus, regardless of the frequency or time of day, they are required to complete the screening. The tool can be accessed at <https://www.nccc.edu/fall-2020/>.

**2. If a student is doing a “curbside pick-up” of books or other items, do they need to complete the Screening tool?**

No. Though it would be wise to encourage them to do so.

**3. Where can a student locate the College Daily COVID Screening tool?**

The tool can be accessed at <https://www.nccc.edu/fall-2020/>.

**4. If I am already using a COVID-19 screening tool at home, do I still need to complete the College’s Daily COVID Screening tool?**

Yes. While we applaud the steps you are taking to ensure your safety and health as well as that of our community, students are required to complete the College’s *Daily COVID Screening tool* each time they are on campus. The tool can be accessed at <https://www.nccc.edu/fall-2020/>.

**5. If I am a student in a fully remote fashion, do I need to complete the College’s Daily COVID Screening tool when in class?**

No. The screening tool is only completed by those coming to campus. While it will be helpful to familiarize yourself with the screening questions as one further step to protect yourself and others, we ask that you do not complete it unless you are planning to be on-campus.

**6. Do screening requirements apply to all campuses?**

Yes. Screening is required for students whenever they will be on campus property. That includes all of our operations in Malone, Saranac Lake, and Ticonderoga.

## ***Student Testing***

### ***1. What are the testing requirements for students?***

The College has mandatory testing requirements for students, both prior to arrival on campus and ongoing surveillance testing for those students who will be on campus regularly.

For the Spring 2021 semester, all students will need to provide evidence of a negative COVID-19 PCR test before their arrival on campus or evidence of a positive COVID-19 test no more than three (3) months prior to their arrival on campus.

The negative COVID-19 PCR test must be completed no sooner than seven (7) days prior to their arrival. This can be done either through the College's pooled saliva surveillance testing which will be administered to students the week of February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 or obtaining a nasopharyngeal PCR test administered by a hospital or provider. Results should be provided to our Campus Safety Monitor, Tara Smith.

Once on campus, students will be required to participate in pooled saliva surveillance testing no less than one time every two weeks.

### ***2. What is pooled saliva surveillance testing and how does it work?***

Pooled saliva surveillance testing (PSST) is method to detect the presence of the novel coronavirus through a person's saliva. Participants provide a saliva sample obtained through swabbing the inside of one's cheek. Up to twelve (12) samples are pooled together and tested as one unit. The methodology allows for detection of virus in the pooled sample and, if found, to then return to each individual sample to determine which individual(s) is/are positive.

### ***3. Where is the pooled saliva surveillance testing occurring?***

We are offering pooled saliva surveillance testing on each of our campuses. Students will participate at the campus where they are studying or receiving services. Dates and times are provided by our Campus Safety Monitor. The samples themselves are analyzed by SUNY Upstate, where the testing procedure was developed.

### ***4. What are the costs of participating in pooled saliva surveillance testing?***

There are no costs for the student. The College pays \$15/sample and an additional \$60/sample if positive tests are identified.

### ***5. Are there any restrictions that I should know about related to testing?***

Yes. Prior to testing, participants are not to eat or drink anything, including chewing gum, mints, or lozenges, within 30 minutes of reporting, and should not have brushed their teeth or used mouthwash within the past three hours. In

addition, those testing must abstain from smoking, vaping, or using smokeless tobacco products for 30 minutes prior to the test.

**6. *How is the sample I provide identified as mine?***

Participants need to register with SUNY Upstate at least two days prior to testing at <https://www.suny-covid-test.com/>. In addition to demographic information, the registration requires insurance information in case additional testing of the sample is required (this only occurs if the samples are positive). On the day of testing, each individual is provided with a test kit that comes with a unique number which becomes identified as theirs. Those are double-checked and matched up with the profile you created with SUNY Upstate.

**7. *How am I notified of my testing results?***

SUNY Upstate notifies our Campus Safety Monitor, Tara Smith, of the results of each pooled sample. This is done through a secure email. Tara will then distribute that information to each participant.

**8. *How soon will I know the results?***

At present, the results are coming back generally 2-3 days after the sample is sent to SUNY Upstate.

**9. *What happens if I test positive for COVID-19 through the pooled saliva surveillance test?***

All testing results are communicated to our Campus Safety Monitor, Tara Smith, through secure email. If you test positive, Tara will then reach out to you personally to apprise you of that, contact the county public health office where you live (this is required of us), and work to help you prepare for the required precautionary isolation measures you will need to take.

**10. *If I test positive for COVID-19, do I need to have another COVID-19 test before I can return to school?***

No. Testing is not required as a condition to return to school. Current guidance is that one must isolate for no less than ten (10) days and have three (3) consecutive fever-free and symptom-free days before returning to school.

**11. *If I test positive for COVID-19, should I participate in the pooled saliva surveillance testing that the College offers?***

No. Current guidance is that if one has tested positive for COVID-19 within the last three months and has recovered, they have the potential to register as positive in the test. Those individuals are encouraged to monitor themselves through symptom scanning.

**12. *If I participate in the pooled saliva surveillance testing, do I need to also participate in the screening tool?***

Yes. Screening is required for students whenever they are on campus property.

**13. Can I participate in pooled saliva surveillance testing elsewhere?**  
No. Students are required to participate in the College administered testing if on-campus regularly.

**14. Can the results from the pooled saliva surveillance testing be used to satisfy the testing requirements of other agencies (e.g. nursing homes)?**

Our understanding is that they are not being accepted by other agencies as proof of COVID-19 negative status.